



SOLANO COUNTY
Department of Resource Management

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DELTA CONSERVANCY
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2011 JAN 24 AM 11:06

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Bill Emlen, Director
Clifford K. Covey, Assistant Director

January 20, 2011

Cindy Messer, Interim Executive Officer
Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy
3500 Industrial Blvd.
West Sacramento, CA 95691-6521

Dear Ms. Messer:

Solano County staff has reviewed the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Draft Interim Strategic Plan (ISP) dated January 6, 2011. It was very helpful to receive an overview of your guiding principles, strategic goals, mandates, long-term goals and near-term strategies and next steps.

The structure of the Conservancy's ISP and the emphasis that it places on partnering and working collaboratively with local governments and communities is encouraging. The Conservancy's mission clearly strives to achieve stated priorities for the Delta that is within its scope by partnering with others. This is admirable but also challenging given the potential stressors between the various priorities and parties. Local entities such as Solano County can play an important role in reconciling these challenges.

As the draft ISP evolves and is finalized, there are a number of issues of importance to the County that we hope will be addressed by the Strategic Plan. The County has long had concerns with various Delta plans that include large scale conversion of agricultural lands to habitat restoration projects. While the County acknowledges the potential environmental value of these type projects, we believe they must be balanced against the impacts they will have on very productive agricultural lands and the communities and local culture that are tied to these lands. Our hope is that through careful planning there may be ways to preserve important agricultural lands while allowing the habitat restoration projects and retention of the Delta community fabric and underlying economic base.

Building & Safety
David Cliche
Building Official

Planning Services
Mike Yankovich
Program Manager

Environmental
Health
Terry Schmidtbauer
Program Manager

Administrative
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Su Krishnan
Sr. Staff Analyst

Public Works-
Engineering
Paul Wiese
Engineering Manager

Public Works-
Operations
Wayne Spencer
Operations Manager

The County has consistently articulated the issues we would like addressed in the myriad of State and Federal Delta planning efforts. *These include mitigation of impacts on agricultural lands and production; protection of the most productive agricultural lands for continued agricultural use; service impacts on public safety entities; loss of local property taxes and the need for off-setting revenues to keep local government whole; increased road wear and tear associated with habitat projects and the need for mitigation of these impacts; assurance that sufficient long-term funding is available for ongoing maintenance of habitat areas; and the need to minimize potential restrictions of agricultural activities that are adjacent to habitat projects. We ask that issues on this list that are within in the Conservancy's purview be addressed in the final Strategic Plan.*

In addition to the general comments above, the County has a number of specific comments as highlighted below:

- There seems to be contradictory language on the timing of the Interim vs. Rural Strategic Plan. The second paragraph on page 7 indicates the Interim Plan will guide Conservancy operation through 2014. This contradicts to the statement in the second paragraph on page 214 which indicates the final plan will be completed by mid 2011. These statements should be re-evaluated and reconciled for consistency.
- If bond money does not materialize, what mechanism will the Conservancy use to categorize, prioritize and implement projects? Will it be by regional benefit, efficiency, or based on its value to the Delta?
- Long-term and Near-term strategies for implementing projects should include ongoing funding for project operations and maintenance.
- Will project evaluations be conducted after distribution of funds to ensure intended use?
- Because of the Conservancy's role in ecosystem restoration, will it play a role in developing adaptive management criteria and weighing results of habitat restoration efforts based on such criteria? Suggest that a significant Delta agency establish itself as the guardian of the adaptive management process to protect against ecosystem damage.
- This document notes five plans that the Conservancy's Interim Strategic Plan must be consistent with that do not include the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). Although consistency with BDCP may not be a requirement, because of its potential importance to the Delta, it should be noted prominently in some fashion.
- This document should contain guidance on timing and extent of analysis of potential habitat projects and their impacts on other land uses in the vicinity. This would include possible increased flood potential and levee impacts on non-habitat lands. Early hydraulic and hydro dynamic analysis will be critical to fully assess impacts of

the creation of a new habitat area, and on unintended consequences on nearby land.

As noted above, Solano County is interested in working with the Conservancy in their efforts. You may contact me or Kathy Barnes-Jones in my office to further discuss this possibility, and hopefully arrange for follow-up steps.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bill Emlen", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Bill F. Emlen
Director of Resources Management

Attachment

cc: Solano County Board of Supervisors
Birgitta Corsello, Assistant County Administrator
Amy Jenkins, Legislative, Intergovernmental and Public Information Officer
Cliff Covey, Assistant Director, Resource Management
Dan Wolk, Deputy County Counsel
Kathy Barnes-Jones, Senior Staff Analyst
David Okita, General Manager, Solano County Water Agency
Mike Hardesty, General Manager, Reclamation District 2068
Steve Chappell, Suisun Resource Conservation District
Eddie Woodruff, Solano County Delta Conservancy Appointee
Mary Ann Courville, Solano County Delta Conservancy Alternate Appointee
Delta Counties Coalition